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Subject: Flint Readout 04/25/16

Flint residents say water crisis has lasted "2 years too long"

By Steve Carmody, Michigan Radio 04/25/16 5:40 PM

“They poisoned the wrong city, everybody!” one speaker shouted at today’s rally at Flint city hall to mark the second anniversary of the city’s mishandled switch to its namesake river as its drinking water source. Today’s rally drew a small, but passionate crowd. Many of those at the afternoon rally have been among the stalwart group of protesters demanding help and restitution for Flint residents for years.

A look back: Flint water crisis turns two years old

By Josh Hakala, Michigan Radio 04/25/16 5:20 PM [radio clip]

Two years ago today, the city of Flint switched its drinking water source from the Detroit River to the Flint River – water we now know was not treated with corrosion control chemicals. Water that went on to corrode pipes and cause lead to leach into people's drinking water. This was the origin of the Flint water crisis, and one of the first journalists to start covering the story was Ron Fonger from the MLive.com and The Flint Journal. He joined Stateside to reflect on the last two years.

Flint activists mark water switch anniversary

By Jacob Carah, Detroit News 04/25/16 5:20 PM

Lee-Anne Walters, the local activist and early voice of protesters in the city's water crisis, stood in front of City Hall on Monday to mark the two-year anniversary of the city's water system switch to the corrosive Flint River. That April 25, 2014, switch is now known for causing lead to leach from the city's pipes into its water supply, poisoning residents.

Creagh: DEQ 'could have done things better' in Flint

By Paul Egan, Detroit Free Press 04/25/16 1:24 PM

The interim director of the Michigan Department of Environmental Quality admitted Monday to "a breakdown" in his department's response to repeated complaints from Flint residents about smelly, discolored water in 2014 and 2015.

Flint marks 2nd anniversary of the start of its drinking water crisis

By Steve Carmody, Michigan Radio 04/25/16 11:00 AM

Today marks the second anniversary of Flint's ill-fated switch to the Flint River for the city's drinking water source. The river water was not properly treated with anti-corrosive chemicals, and the highly corrosive river water damaged pipes and fixtures, which continue to leach lead into the city's drinking water.

Two Key Players In Flint's Water Crisis Died Last Week

By Mae Rice, Chicagoist 04/25/16 11:01 AM

Two people connected to the Flint water crisis recently died within a week of each other—one in a homicide, the other due to unknown causes. Last Tuesday, one of the first women to file a lawsuit in relation to the Flint water crisis, was found shot to death in a Flint townhouse along with another woman. On April 16, the Saturday before Bell was found shot to death, a foreman at Flint's Water Treatment Plant, 43-year-old Matthew McFarland, was found dead in his Otter Lake home; his autopsy was inconclusive.

Woman Leading Flint Water Lawsuits Against Government Found Murdered Days After Water Plant Foreman Dies Suspiciously

By Tara West, InQuisitr 04/24/16

Sasha Bell, the first person to file a lawsuit against the government in connection to the Flint water crisis, was found murdered alongside a second victim on April 19, 2016. The 19-year-old mother was the first to file a lawsuit against the government after claiming her 1-year-old son suffered from lead poisoning due to the contaminated water supply in the city. There are now 64 active lawsuits against Flint following Bell's initial claim, but Bell will not be able to testify in the high-profile case as she was found shot to death in a Flint townhouse on Tuesday.

Sasha Bell: Mother Who Sued Over Flint Water Crisis Found Shot to Death

By Ny Magee, InQuisitr 04/22/16

Nineteen-year-old Sasha Avonna Bell, a Flint mother who was one of the first to sue over the water crisis, was found shot to death inside a townhouse earlier this week. The body of a second woman, Sacorya Reed, was also found in the home. NY Daily News reports that an infant was found uninjured, but it's not clear if that was Bell's son. He was taken into custody by child protective services. Flint police say they have a person in custody in connection to the slayings. No charges have yet been filed, nor has the motive been revealed.

MSP captain explains controversial Flint e-mail

By Paul Egan, Detroit Free Press 04/25/16 5:16 PM

A Michigan State Police captain said Monday he offered "an editorial comment" he should not have made when he told the governor's office in November that declaring a state of emergency

in Flint could amount to the state owning up to having caused the catastrophe. Capt. Chris Kelenske, testifying before the Michigan Legislature's Joint Select Committee on The Flint Water Public Health Emergency, also said that in hindsight the state might have been better off distributing water in larger containers than the small bottles of water the state has used in Flint. Kelenske told the committee the state has distributed more than 10.4 million liters of water in Flint since the state declared a state of emergency over lead contamination of Flint drinking water on Jan. 5 -- most of it has been distributed in half-liter bottles.

State police captain says state closing in on getting water filters to every Flint home

By Ron Fonger, MLIVE 04/25/16 5:00 PM

The state is continuing its efforts to get water filters into the homes of the hardest-to-reach Flint residents, including those who may be avoiding relief workers or police. Capt. Chris Kelenske deputy state director of emergency management homeland security for the Michigan State Police, told a legislative committee Monday, April 25, that nearly 88 percent of Flint apartments and 90 percent of single family homes listed as active water customers in the city have been visited and have at least one water filter.

Legislative panel to hear from top-ranking Snyder officials on Flint

By FOX 17 West Michigan 04/24/16 4:49 PM

A legislative committee created to review Flint's water crisis will hear next from top-ranking leaders in Gov. Rick Snyder's administration. Department of Environmental Quality interim Director Keith Creagh and Department of Health and Human Services Director Nick Lyon are among those scheduled to testify Monday in Lansing. A task force appointed by Snyder has concluded the state of Michigan is "fundamentally accountable" for Flint's lead-contaminated water emergency because of decisions made by environmental regulators and state-appointed emergency managers who controlled the city.

Legislative Panel Holds 5th Hearing On Flint Water Crisis

By CBS Detroit 04/25/16 12:46 PM

A legislative committee created to review Flint's water crisis hearing from top-ranking leaders in Gov. Rick Snyder's administration. Department of Environmental Quality interim Director Keith Creagh and Department of Health and Human Services Director Nick Lyon are among those scheduled to testify Monday in Lansing.

Legionnaires' Disease

Health chief: Legionnaires' didn't rise much to his level

By David Eggert AP for Washington Post 04/25/16 5:33 PM

The head of Michigan's health agency said Monday there was an eight-month gap between when he was made aware of an investigation into a Legionnaires' disease outbreak in the Flint area in January 2015 and when the issue rose to his level again around the time the city's lead-tainted water crisis exploded in September. Nick Lyon, director of the Department of Health and Human Services, then waited another four months — until January 2016 — to notify Gov. Rick Snyder about the spike that some outside experts have linked to Flint's 2014 switch to a local river for drinking water while under state financial management. At least 91 Legionnaires' cases, including 12 deaths, were detected over a 17-month period.

Health chief: Ebola distracted from Genesee County Legionnaires' outbreak

By Rick Pluta, Michigan Radio 04/25/16 5:25 PM

The state's health director says an outbreak of Legionnaires' disease in Genesee County did not get the attention it deserved from his agency. He says it was partially due to the department's focus on a different health threat that never materialized. Michigan Department of Health and Human Services Director Nick Lyon was testifying before state lawmakers looking into the Flint water crisis. He said health officials were aware of the Legionnaires' outbreak and were trying to track down the cause. But he said the department was also distracted two years ago by preparations to deal with the Ebola virus.

"Certainly, we weren't as aware as we could have been about the Legionella outbreak that was going on in Genesee County," said Lyon.

State health director wasn't consistently aware of Legionnaires' until Sept. 2015, he says

By Emily Lawler, MLIVE 04/25/16 3:45 PM

A deadly outbreak of Legionnaire's Disease wasn't consistently elevated to the attention of Department of Health and Human Services Director Nick Lyon until September of 2015, he told a legislative committee Monday. That contradicts the report from Gov. Rick Snyder's Flint Water Advisory Task Force, which said that a January 2015 meeting including DHHS, the Michigan Department of Environmental Quality and the Genesee County Health Department about cases of Legionellosis in Genesee county.

Lyon denies ordering Flint Legionnaires' probe in 2015

By Chad Livengood, Detroit News 04/25/16 1:43 PM

The head of Michigan's Department of Health and Human Services denied Monday he ordered an investigation into a spike in Legionnaires' disease cases in Genesee County in January 2015 — a year before he told Gov. Rick Snyder about the deadly outbreak. Welfare and health Director Nick Lyon refuted a section of a report issued last month by Snyder's Flint water task force that said he was involved in a January 2015 meeting with Genesee County health officials about the Legionnaires' disease outbreak.

Other Health Related Clips

Flint residents fight water's effects on hair, skin

By Kyla Smith, Detroit News, 04/25/16 1:25 PM

In a hidden salon that sits off the side of road on the city's west side, hair stylist Nina Arthur has taken special precautions to protect her clients from lead exposure. Arthur, owner of Nina's Hair Care on Flushing, has been using charcoal shampoo on her clients' hair for more than 17 years, but it has become increasingly important for her to use it now amid the city's lead-tainted water crisis.

Flint health supervisor butts heads with state officials

Karen Bouffard, Detroit News 04/24/16 7:47 PM

When Environmental Health Supervisor Jim Henry started his job with Genesee County in September 2014, he thought he would be inspecting restaurants, swimming pools and residential wells. That is what he did as an environmental health supervisor in Livingston County for 18 years. But the 46-year-old father of two wanted to return to Flint, the town where he grew up, and where his parents and relatives still live.

Water Defense calling for bathing water standards amid Flint water crisis

By Amanda Emery, MLIVE 04/23/16 8:22 AM

Flint residents gathered Friday to listen to an investigator from Water Defense talk about bathing and the organization's test results during the water crisis. Scott Smith, Chief Technology Officer and Investigator from the Water Defense, spoke to residents during a joint news conference with Water You Fighting for in the city council chambers at Flint city hall on Friday, April 22. Water Defense has been doing testing in homes around the city looking for a full spectrum of chemicals along with testing water inside hot water heaters.

Zika funding battle steals states' public health emergency money

By Lena H. Sun, Washington Post 04/25/16 6:00 AM

Cities and states preparing for possible Zika outbreaks this spring and summer are losing millions of federal dollars that local officials say they were counting on, not only for on-the-ground efforts to track and contain the spread of the mosquito-borne virus but also to respond to other emergencies that threaten public health. Michigan is concerned about providing resources to help Flint contend with its ongoing water-contamination crisis. Minnesota plans to reduce its stockpile of certain medications needed to treat first responders during emergencies.

GOP bill includes \$30 million for Flint, \$40 million for rural areas

By Mark Tower, MLIVE 04/25/16 4:13 PM

Legislation introduced last week by eight Republicans from Michigan's congressional delegation would provide financial aid to Flint and to other communities in the state in a response to that city's water crisis. House Resolution 5013 would provide \$30 million in aid to Flint and another \$40 million to rural communities, according to a press release from the Michigan congressman who introduced the legislation on April 20.

Flint Residents Get Discounted Water Bills

By Arthur Delaney, Huffington Post 04/25/16 4:46 PM

Residents of Flint, Michigan, have been paying the highest water bills in America for water they can't even drink because it's tainted with lead. This month, they're finally getting some relief — a discount on all bills going forward based on how much customers have paid since April 2014, when Flint disastrously switched its water source. When Joy Murray logged into her online water account last week, she saw she'd been credited with \$424. Since she hadn't paid a bill since December out of protest, the discount brought her balance down to \$16.

House, Senate panels OK budgets for government, schools

By Kathleen Gray, Detroit Free Press 04/23/16 11:24 PM

The House and Senate appropriations committees passed out their versions of the state budget last week, and in some cases deviated from what Gov. Rick Snyder proposed in February. Once the full House and Senate vote on their versions, a conference committee will be formed to iron out any differences. The two biggest financial challenges in the state — the Flint water crisis and the Detroit Public Schools — still are unresolved. The Senate is considering a \$148.8-million supplemental bill for Flint that Snyder had included in his budget proposal, which would get the money for education, nutrition and lead pipe improvement and replacement to the city sooner. The House has included some of the Flint money in its overall budget.

Michigan cops tracking Flint water critics on social media and sharing data with embattled governor

By Tom Boggioni, Raw Story 04/25/16 1:34 PM

Confronted with information found in emails from Gov. Rick Snyder, as spokesperson for the Michigan State Police admitted her agency is monitoring social media and looking at comments about the Flint water crisis in search of threats. According to MLive, a State Police senior intelligence analyst highlighted a possible threatening statement following a Detroit Free Press article regarding Flint's water woes that has roiled the Snyder administration with calls for the governor's prosecution.

State police using online surveillance to track talk on Flint water crisis

By Gary Ridley, MLIVE 04/25/16 10:05 AM

State police officials are using online surveillance to monitor social media comments made about the Flint water crisis, according to emails released by Gov. Rick Snyder's office. The emails show that officials attempted on at least one occasion to initiate criminal proceedings against a Copper City man over allegedly threatening comments he made on Facebook about the government's handling of the crisis.

Michigan police tracking social media to keep tabs on Flint water crisis chatter

By RT 04/25/16

State police in Michigan have been conducting online surveillance to track social media discussions related to the Flint water crisis, even attempting to press charges against one man over a Facebook post, new emails released by the state show. Although being reported by Michigan Live only now, the revelation initially came from an April 15 document dump by the administration of Michigan Governor Rick Snyder. The governor promised to release emails related to the lead contamination of Flint's water after the state came under intense criticism for its responsibility in the crisis.

Emails on Flint water crisis could uncover truth; Charges pressed against three men

By Lawyer Herald 04/25/16 11:48 AM

Attorney general Bill Schuette said that they will continue to pursue the case of Flint's Water Crisis to uncover the truth behind the issue. Schuette's statement came after three men were charged in line with their involvement in the case. As reported by New York Times, Schuette promised that they will continue sorting the emails of various employees to find the right individuals who must be charged after the first three men. "We'll go wherever the truth takes us - and, in this case, wherever the emails take us", he said.

Emails Deepen Criminal Cases in Flint, but Charges May Be Tough to Prove

By Monica Davey & Abby Goodnough, New York Times 04/24/16

As Bill Schuette, the attorney general of Michigan, announced criminal charges against three government workers in Flint's water crisis, he pledged there would be more charges soon, saying, "We'll go wherever the truth takes us — and, in this case, wherever the emails take us." Thousands of email messages, which were made public in the months since state authorities acknowledged lead contamination in the city's water last fall, are at the center of the state's case, and more messages may yet come to light as prosecutors appear likely to weigh possible charges against higher-level officials.

Flint crisis makes governor legal target

Jennifer Chambers, Detroit News 04/24/16 11:10 PM

Being sued is part of the job for the state's highest elected official, but these are especially busy days for Gov. Rick Snyder's legal team. Litigants looking to right alleged wrongs by the state start at the top with the governor, who's in charge of signing into law and enforcing the state's policies and statutes.

Darnell Earley charges pricey attorney to cash-strapped Flint

By Paul Egan, Detroit Free Press 04/23/16 11:49 PM

Former Flint emergency manager Darnell Earley tried to bill the cash-strapped city \$750 an hour for an attorney to sit with him while he was questioned last month in Washington by a congressional committee and to represent him in ongoing criminal investigations related to the Flint drinking water crisis, records obtained by the Free Press show.

Records: Falsified report led to charges in Flint water crisis

Elisha Anderson & John Wisely, Detroit Free Press 04/22/16 11:21 PM

After tests showed Flint's drinking water had excessive lead during the summer of 2015, Mike Glasgow went to his office at the city's water treatment plant and talked on the phone with two employees with the Michigan Department of Environmental Quality. The DEQ officials, Stephen Busch and Michael Prysby, "insisted" that Glasgow alter a July 2015 report and exclude two test sites, thereby reducing the lead level in the tested water, said a warrant request obtained by the Detroit Free Press Friday.

Ingham judges deny grand juror investigation into Flint water crisis

By Matt Mencarini, Lansing State Journal, 04/22/16 5:38 PM

Ingham County Circuit Court judges denied a complaint seeking a one-man grand juror judicial investigation of Gov. Rick Snyder and other public officials related to the Flint drinking water crisis. The matter was reviewed by the nine judges and denied Thursday, according to a court order, "for the reason that the matters complained of are currently under investigation by another body."

Activists start charity to help people struggling in Flint

By Steve Carmody, Michigan Radio 04/25/16 3:22 PM

A group of Flint water activists is starting a new charity to help people not reached by government and other groups. Organizer Lee Anne Walters says Community Development Organization's first priority will be to help people who find they can't pay medical bills tied to Flint's lead tainted drinking water. "It's something that needs to be done. It's a great need in the community. And so this is where we feel we fit best right now," says Walters.

Flint citizens announce initiative for response to lead-tainted water

By Click On Detroit 04/25/16 2:35 PM

Eight of the architects of the Flint Water Resistance including LeeAnne Walters, Arthur Woodson, Tonya Williams, Keri Webber, Tracy Hacker, Jessica Owens, Tim Grey and Jessica Lewis announced a new initiative to respond to the tremendous healthcare, infrastructure, education and economic impact that the Flint Water Crisis has had on their community. The "Community Development Organization," a nonprofit group, will address the need for citizen participation and oversight in the recovery efforts, as well as, the absolute 100 percent transparency necessary for the recovery efforts to succeed.

Snoop Dogg, Morris Peterson planning Flint celebrity basketball game

By Eric Woodyard, MLIVE 04/25/16 11:41 AM

In the midst of the water crisis, rapper Snoop Dogg made a surprise trip to Flint to meet with Mayor Karen Weaver on Jan. 30. After getting a better understanding of the situation, the hip-hop star is now planning to return. Snoop Dogg will team with Michigan State basketball legend and former NBA veteran Morris Peterson for a special "Hoop 4 Water" celebrity basketball game, according to his Instagram account.

Student Nurses in Flint Help Test Children's Blood for Lead

By Advance Healthcare Network for Nurses, 04/25/16

According to reports from the Associated Press, nursing students and faculty members from the University of Michigan's Flint campus (UM-Flint), who draw and test blood and provide educational materials to parents, have been a huge assist to the overworked Genesee County Health Department, which has tested tens of thousands of people for lead exposure since the scope of the problem became clear last year. Approximately 150 representatives from UM-Flint volunteered at clinics in February and March. Recently, at an event held at Richfield Public

School Academy, where Flint parents who were worried about the city's lead contamination could bring their children for testing, Veronica Robinson, a UM-Flint nursing lecturer, worked alongside student Mat Rowden, who will complete his nursing degree in the fall.

Flint's Water Crisis Could Slow Its Housing Recovery

By Alex P. Kellogg, NBC News 04/23/16 3:39 PM

In March, Estelle Holley bought a mock "for sale" sign decorated with a skull and bones and draped it across the front of her house. Holley says the sign is a metaphor for the fact that her home is worth almost nothing, owing to this shrinking automotive town's myriad woes, most notably the water crisis that began two years ago.

Other News

Flint's crisis can be fixed with \$55M in new pipes: Lansing mayor

By Trent Gillies, CNBC 04/24/16 9:00 AM [video clip]

As Flint, Michigan's water disaster continues, a blueprint to fix the city's lead contamination is being floated by the mayor of the state's capital city. A decade ago, Lansing was able to avoid a toxic tap water disaster in their city by making a decision to initiate a massive lead pipe removal program. It's a solution the city's mayor is advocating to Flint, in order to alleviate a problem that's morphed into a national scandal.

'Detectives who cracked' Flint water crisis case among Time's most influential people

By Michael Lewis II, Crain's Detroit Business 04/22/16 5:15 PM

Time Magazine named pediatrician Mona Hanna-Attisha and Virginia Tech professor Marc Edwards — both credited with exposing Flint's lead-tainted water crisis — to its annual list of the 100 Most Influential People in the world. "Up against official ignorance and indifference, Edwards and Hanna-Attisha were right, they were brave, and they were insistent," MSNBC political pundit Rachel Maddow wrote in her piece on the pair for the magazine. "Flint is still a crime scene, but these two caring, tough researchers are the detectives who cracked the case."

Beyond Flint

Erin Brockovich Lists 10,000 US Communities With Poisoned Water

By Sally Painter, Top Secret Writers 04/25/16 10:00 AM

On the heels of Michigan Governor Rick Snyder testifying before Congress about lead contamination found in Flint, Michigan tap water, consumer advocate/lawyer Erin Brockovich has more alarming news. There is a water crisis in America. Contaminated tap water isn't just a Flint, Michigan issue. It's an epidemic across America. According to Brockovich, community contaminated water supplies is a chronic but ignored problem with complaints falling on deaf ears. That all changed with what Brockovich calls the "perfect storm" – Flint, Michigan. Brockovich states the problem very clearly, "Unfortunately, it takes a huge crisis like Flint for everybody else to wake up."

Tacoma: Water in Lead Pipes Could Be Dangerous to Homeowners

By J. Wheaton, Newsmax 04/22/16 1:36 PM

High levels of lead found in Tacoma tap water in Washington state have led Seattle Public Utilities and others to urge caution to customers as concerns first sparked by a water crisis in Flint, Michigan, continue to spread. Seattle Public Utilities told its 650,000 customers to run their water for two minutes before using it if it hasn't been turned on for six hours or longer, The Seattle Times reported.

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